

Dr. Badgley.

THEOLOGICAL UNION

OF

Mount Allison Wesleyan College

FIRST ANNUAL

LECTURE AND SERMON,

DELIVERED JUNE 1879.

HALIFAX, N. S. :
CONFERENCE OFFICE, 125 GRANVILLE STREET
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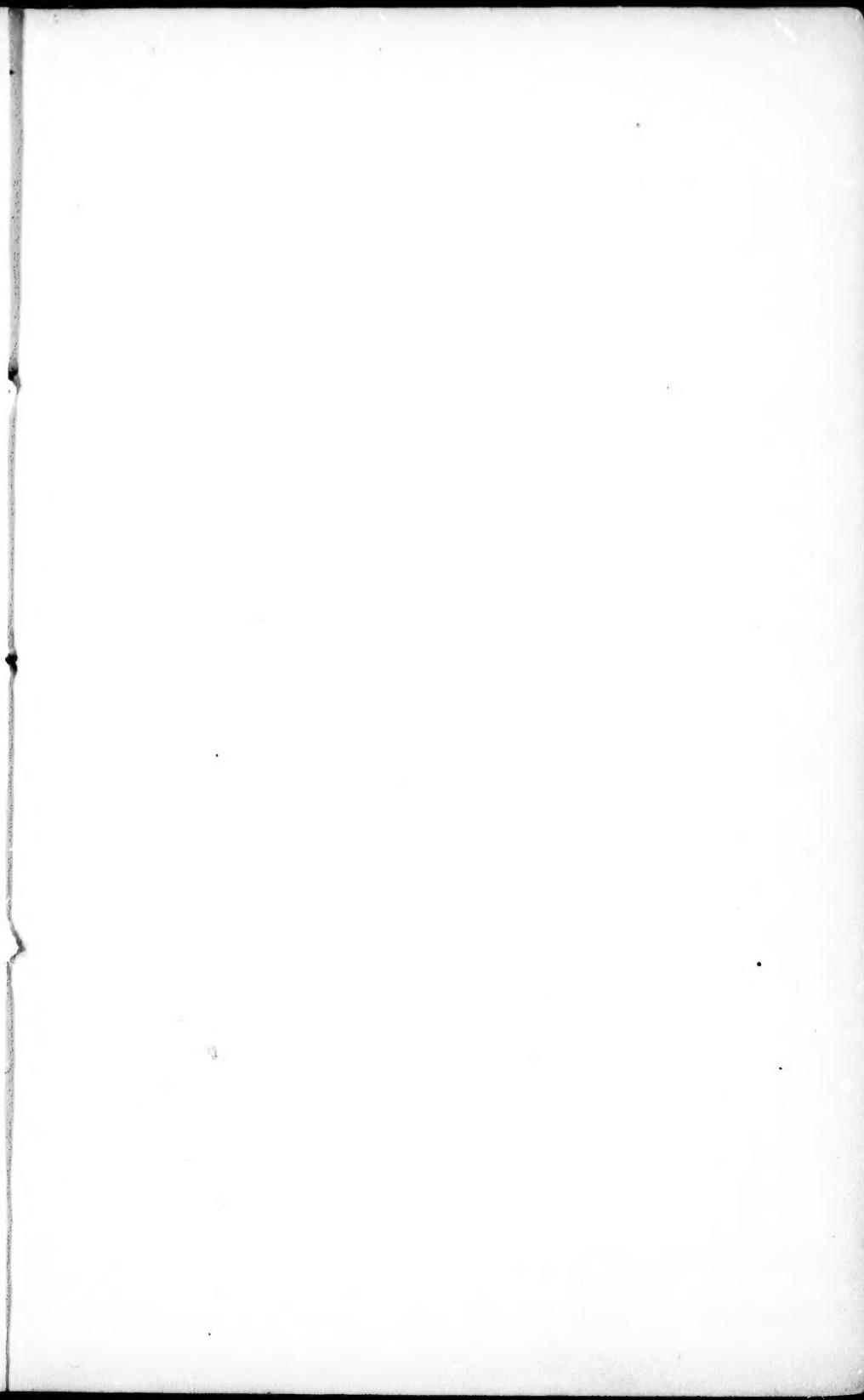
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THE TEACHING OF CHRIST
IN REGARD TO
HIS OWN PERSON AND WORK.
*A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE THEOLOGICAL UNION
OF MOUNT ALLISON WESLEYAN COLLEGE.*
By REV. C. STEWART, D. D.

LECTURE.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST, IN REGARD TO HIS OWN PERSON AND WORK.

CHRISTIANITY exists. Men may differ in opinion as to the origin of this religion, as to its credibility, and as to its issue—whether it is but a temporary stage in the education of the human race, or the final display of “the philanthropy of God our Saviour”—but this at least is beyond contradiction, that such a religion has come into being, and that it now is. Nor is this fact of only recent times. Something known by the name—a marvellous history, a system of belief, a mode of worship, a code of morals—has been recognized among the principal nations of the world, for nearly nineteen hundred years.

Christianity also lives. Exhibiting, from the first, an inherent vitality, it has, amidst the most strenuous opposition, forced its way down to our own times. It has naturalized itself among nations the most diverse in circumstances and character, and at the farthest remove, alike of place and usage, from the people among whom it originated. It has rescued the most degraded tribes from anarchy and extinction, and raised them to the

highest level of true manhood. It has added to the resources of civilized society, and opened and guarded new channels of commercial enterprise. It has created positive science, and has stimulated and trained the human intellect. It has inculcated a system of duty which, though sometimes censured as being too unselfish and too sublime, is always found to be compatible with the strictest justice, and promotive of the highest interests of mankind. Nor is this all. There are other facts which, though spiritual in their nature, are quite as capable of being substantiated, analysed, and made the basis of a sound induction, as any we have named. Christianity has been a reforming, nay, a regenerating power. It has given the idea of moral purity, and inspired the hope of its realization. It has made the cruel gentle, and the selfish bountiful. It has sustained the afflicted in the severest sorrows, and enabled them peacefully, and oftentimes joyously, to surrender property, friends, and life itself, rather than violate the dictates of a good conscience. And it does all this still. While other religions give evidence of weakness and decay, this combines at once the placidity of age, the full vigor of manhood, and the ardor and enterprise of youth. Disdaining all earth-born alliances, yet adapting itself to humanity in all its conditions; scorning patronage and defying resistance, undaunted by misrepresentation and undismayed by ingratitude, it goes forth on its mission of mercy, proclaiming and procuring "On earth peace, good will toward men."

Facts like these cannot be ignored. They are not merely coincident with Christianity, but they arise out

of it. And as every effect must have an adequate cause, so, undeniably, there is some principle of life within this religion, which is efficient in the production of these results.

Is this religion of Heaven then, or is it only of men? This enquiry comes to us in the most impressive manner, and is echoed around us by many voices. It deserves to be pondered. It must be met. Evasion is not only unworthy, it is simply impossible. Nor may any one of us think that he can stand outside the assemblage of interested disputants, and, in serene isolation, reach his conclusion. Calmness and candour become us, but no less solicitude, patience, and the most thorough and practical earnestness. For this subject is a personal one, and our highest interests are involved in it. The very possibility of the Christian religion being true makes it further possible that obligations and issues of inconceivable magnitude are in our keeping; and therefore is there required from us the utmost diligence of investigation, and the most unfaltering loyalty to the requirements of the truth.

The answer to the question just raised is capable of being reached in a great variety of ways. But one thing is certain, that the Christian religion cannot be viewed apart from its author; for an author it undoubtedly had, on whom, as a foundation, it is built, "and that rock was Christ."

The attempt has indeed been made to divest the "signs and mighty works" which he wrought of their supernatural character; to evaporate them into myths, or to regard them as so much imposture resulting from the

“tendency” of His followers to construct and diffuse a new religion. But the attempt has never yet been made, and, we may assume, never will be, to deny the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or that He said and did something which well entitles Him to be distinguished as the founder of Christianity. And, yet more, Christianity centres in Him. He is the subject of its books,—of the New Testament, and, if that is to be believed, of the Old Testament as well. He is the source of its power—the very embodiment of its peculiar “force.” He is the model of its excellence—the typal man. He is its absolute lord, legislator, ruler, and judge, in one. And “thou shalt call His name Jesus, for he shall save His people from their sins.” • We can therefore unhesitatingly accept the formula which has been sometimes employed to disparage the doctrinal system of the Christian faith, and avow that “Christianity is Christ.”

But in reference to Him, we might again test our question by several methods. Did His works bear a truly Divine signature? And what of His character? Was it pure, and, being thoroughly tried, was it unsullied to the end? Was it perfect, the exhibition of all conceivable excellence, and of excellence which, but for Him, would to us have been for ever inconceivable? The reply can only be in the affirmative. The roll of centuries, the investigations of natural and of metaphysical science, and the deepening and widening love for truth, for justice, and for goodness, which characterizes our age, serve but to confirm the impression made upon humanity by the appearance of Christ, that “truly this man was the son of God.”

We turn, however, in another direction to-day. Jesus of Nazareth was a teacher, and we propose to try the truth of Christianity by the doctrines which He taught. This may be the more necessary because such various opinions have been entertained on this subject. While by some, honor has been paid to His ethical precepts, equal dishonour has been done to other of His statements, on which, as we believe, the value of the former depends. Others, again, professing to find a different Christianity in the Epistles from what is contained in the Gospels, endeavour to divide the New Testament into two hostile encampments, and leave the words of Christ and His Apostles, to work out their mutual destruction as religious teaching. Nor must we fail to notice some very recent attempts to depreciate, not only the moral excellence of the teaching of Christ, but His own truthfulness and honesty. All such speculations touch the very vitals of the Christian religion. It is either wholly true, or utterly false and misleading. It either leads in the ways of virtue, or it is the champion and instigator of the basest wrong and most daring impiety. Well, then, does it behove us to search this matter to its very foundation. It is true that there are pretentious offers of service here. We, say some, speak with authority. "Hear the Church." Human opinion is fallible, and must be discordant. But the true representatives of Christ have in their keeping the meaning of the written word, and this it is which not only gives the genuine interpretation of both law and Gospel, but the authority, sole and sufficient, for accepting both the book and its teaching. Our reply is,

that if Christ is to be believed at all, we are personally required to "search the Scriptures"; that His words are as easy to be understood, and as much "spirit and life" as the words of any interpreter; and that no authority of man can ever add weight to the utterances of Him in whom all authority resides. Others direct us to an infallible guide, in regard to the acceptance of the claims of Christ, and the meaning of His teaching, in the light of natural reason. But not to urge that this guide having been often known to go astray is of doubtful competency, or that he may well be suspected of being under an improper bias, or liable to corrupting influences, let us remember that if reason were sufficient, no other teacher would ever have been given to man. The Divine Being makes no superfluous arrangements for the fulfilment of His purposes. Once let us admit, therefore, that reason is an all perfect guide to us, and it is inconceivable that God would give another. Equally inconceivable is it that men would either receive external teaching, or offer it. The intuitions of humanity in the first case would repel it as a huge impertinence, and in the second, would shun it as alike useless and exasperating. Reason has its own sphere and office; but it is initiative and subordinate. Revelation does not set it aside, and cannot enter into conflict with it. To reason, attentive and candid, revelation submits its own credentials for examination and approval. Yet the latter, as Plenipotentiary from the court of heaven, discloses facts, and deals with questions which neither reason nor any other messenger from that court can possibly have in charge. Revelation, therefore, in

the person of Christ—"and His name is called the Word of God"—can never appeal to any inner light in man as the source of its authority, or the expounder of its teaching. It is itself oracular, supreme, final. To all these controversialists who, directly or circuitously, impeach the veracity of Jesus the Christ, we may address the words of the somewhat timid but honest Jewish Rabbi, "Doth our Law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?"—(John vii. 51).

And here we may rejoice that our course will not involve us in the intricacies of negative criticism. It is not necessary, at the outset, to meet the theories of every writer who sets himself to question the genuineness of the Christian Scriptures, or the absolute accuracy of every section of the books. Whether Matthew should not yield priority to Mark, or whether all the Evangelists did not borrow from earlier documents, are not points of vital importance in the discussion before us. The Evangelists can all be vindicated; and we claim that we are far from being guilty of begging any question when we assume the truth of their narratives. Christ taught, and undoubtedly His teaching has been put on record, and has come down to our time. More than this, the teaching of Christ has at least helped to create a conception of character which manifests its independence and its identity amidst all the changes of human society. Let some wrong be purposed or done, and especially by a person, or a party, professing to be governed by religious motives, and immediately the popular sentiment finds expression in the utterance how un-Christian,—how un-Christlike, is this! Have

we not here a testimony spontaneous and emphatic both to the life and the doctrine of the Great Teacher? Men do not say un-Pauline, un-Petrine, or un-Johannean. We might eliminate any one of these names, or all of them, and yet the impression made by the New Testament teaching would remain the same. On the contrary, to eliminate the name of Christ, if even all the others were left, would be to destroy the very possibility of such a sentiment.

But it may be said, that as this conception is formed by the Gospels, so to appeal to them on behalf of the Divinity of Christ's teaching is but to argue in a circle—making the Evangelists' idea of Christ to be true, only that Christ may affirm the truth of the Evangelists. This objection, however, is not valid. They did not originate, they did but represent the teaching of Christ. The writers of the Gospels are sufficiently distinct from each other, both in their relation of facts and in the style of their narrative, to exclude the possibility of a conspiracy to deceive. This striking individuality is indeed the ground of the most recent attacks upon the credibility of these writers; the Synoptics, it is said, can scarcely be reconciled to each other, and they cannot in any case be made to harmonize with St. John. Yet the person whom they portray is One. When we leave Matthew for Mark, or either for Luke, or when we pass from these to John, we do not feel that we are forsaking the presence of one distinct personality and coming into that of another. There is, notwithstanding the difference of detail, the most perfect congruity between the features of the character of Christ as given by the first

of the Evangelists, and by the second, third, or fourth. And this can only be accounted for by the fact that all of them did truthfully delineate the same living, active personage, according to the manner in which His words and works struck home upon their temperaments respectively. It is Christ Himself, then, who stands before us in the writings of the Evangelists; and we turn to them with perfect confidence to ascertain "all that Jesus began both to do and teach." And, while we listen to Him, we purpose to confine ourselves to His teaching in regard to Himself, to His Person and His work, rather than to what He says of religious matters in general, or of some specific article of the Christian faith, not immediately connected with Himself. If we can truly understand His testimony, we shall surely comprehend the essentials of Christianity, then as now, and now as then.

1. *Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be a teacher of Divine truth, and to have perfect competency and full authority for this work.* He did not, indeed, assume absolute originality—as if no truth, saving in its design, or certain in its nature, had been delivered before his time. Nor did he profess to finish the revelation. Both of these were in the nature of the case impossible. God had spoken at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers. But after a pause of four hundred years, Jesus, while asserting the validity of the law and the prophets, took up the thread of Divine communication, and proceeded to "declare" the full meaning of the earlier record, and to add such further disclosures of the Divine perfections and purposes, as should constitute the very framework

and essence of the final dispensation of religious truth. That He asserted His prerogative to do so, was to place Himself before the two severest tests to which a teacher in the name of God may be subjected. Can His words be taken up into living connexion with what has already been spoken by God? Can they go beyond, and not only never be falsified by future communications, but be found every way adapted to the necessities of men in every subsequent age of the world? Jesus Christ saw this, and not only warranted such an appeal, but invited it. "My doctrine," said He, "is not mine but His that sent me. If any man be willing to do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," (John vii. 16).

Towards the commencement of His public ministry, there are three distinct utterances, which are given at considerable length, with reference to His own character and position as a teacher of the Divine will, and to which, as affording a key to much beside that He said on this subject, it will be necessary now to turn. The first occurs in the conversation with Nicodemus, and has respect to the fulness of knowledge which existed in Himself. The second is found in His discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth, "where He had been brought up," and asserts in the strongest manner the connexion which existed between the Old Testament and Himself—that it spake of Him—while He, in a two-fold manner fulfilled its teaching, *being* what it predicted, and *unfold-ing* fully what it had but prophesied in part. The third is found in the sermon on the Mount, and presents not only the fulfillment of "the law and the prophets," but

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chiefly the authoritative side of His instruction. These three, though capable of being viewed apart, are intimately related to each other, and lie at the very formation of the Christian system.

But here we must pause to anticipate an objection. In John v, 31, our Saviour says, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." May we not then be charged either with presenting Him in a light opposed to his own purpose, or with stating a fact which will involve Christ in the condemnation of prevarication—of saying one thing at one time, and a contrary thing at another? Not so, if a candid examination be made of the entire passage. He had just been putting forth claims of the most extraordinary character, claims of equality with the Father, and of the most perfect unity of being with Him. It was of the utmost moment that His hearers should acknowledge these claims, and it was therefore of the highest importance that His proof of their validity should be incontrovertible. His words then may mean, "If I stand alone in my testimony," or "If I simply bear witness of myself in words," then "my witness is not true." And that such is the meaning of His statement cannot for an instant be doubted when we consider the words that immediately follow. "But I receive not testimony from man," where, again, the fact of such testimony is not disputed, but the necessity of it, in the presence of stronger proof, or its sufficiency without something more tangible. So again, "These things I say that ye might be saved." What things? Those self asserting words which by their very majesty, associated with sobriety and goodness, stand in

no need of merely human confirmation, but carry conviction at once to the mind and heart. And, yet again, in the same strain, not of self-depreciation but of inalienable right, He says: "I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me. And the Father Himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." (John v. 34-37). Here, then, is perfect harmony between one saying and another of the Lord Jesus. He does set Himself forth as the organ of Divine communication to man; yet while resting his claims to be believed both on the sublimity and inherent excellency of His message, and on the works which he wrought, He maintains that it is not His business to go about calling attention or bearing witness to points so obvious, and to which others yield their testimony. Like the sun in the heavens, His shining is its own and all sufficient attestation.

We return to the case of Nicodemus. This Master in Israel addressed our Saviour as a "teacher come from God," and whose mission, in this respect bore unimpeachable credentials: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with Him." This was high commendation from one who was deeply versed in the writings of Moses and of the prophets, and who cordially believed them. Did Jesus Christ refuse the title so given? Let the sequel show. Certain it is that He took it as no mere compliment. It did not throw Him off His guard. It did not induce Him to conceal or mollify unpleasant truths. Rather, as such Divine

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teacher, He uttered the deep things of God. Mark, again, the calm but peerless self-assertion in the words "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Observe how, when there is a tendency to question the unpalatable truth, He re-affirms it with the same "Verily, verily," which speaks the possession of absolute truth and supreme authority. Yet the climax of His announcements is not reached till He introduces a statement which accepts the affirmation of Nicodemus in its highest sense, and gives the proof that it only conveyed the truth. Am I then a teacher come from God? "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things. And no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven." Then, as one who had fully substantiated His rights, not merely as a teacher of Divine things, but even as a Divine teacher, He proceeded to discourse both upon the secret thoughts of the human heart, and upon the gracious and eternal counsels of the infinite God. (John iii. 1—21). At this early stage of His public life therefore, we find Jesus Christ laying down these principles: that as a teacher He was sent into the world by God; that in Himself He possesses an infinite fulness of knowledge and wisdom; and that it is His office to declare this truth before men and to enforce it upon their understanding and conscience. Nor is this an exceptional case about which it were possible, because of its singu-

larity, that we might be mistaken. The whole tenor of his instruction conveyed the same idea. How incidentally it appears in the observation, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent." (Mark i, 43). With what a force of diction and grandeur of illustration, combined with moral discrimination, does He declare, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii, 12). Could anything be more preposterous coming from the lips of simple humanity? Could anything be more natural from one who lived, and acted, and spake, as Jesus did? But hear Him again: "He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." "I am the truth." "The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself but He sent me." "And because I tell you the truth ye believe me not." "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." (John viii, 26; xiv, 6; viii, 29, 38, 42, 45, 47). Take again that most consolatory and animating passage, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is it not inseparably united to "learn of me," and does not this look back to "all things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. xi, 27-29.) Thus one of the most distinctively gracious invitations, of the

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Scriptures, and to invalidate which would materially diminish the value of the New Testament, proceeds upon the supposition that Christ is the only adequate revealer of God, and that in this respect He must be acknowledged and received.

Another class of utterances is equally emphatic. We look forward to the future, and enquire concerning our own destiny. And here again the postulate is not merely that Christ alone can bring life and immortality to light, but that a state of future blessedness is to be secured, a state of future misery to be avoided, only by a cordial submission to the doctrine of Christ. "Jesus cried and said, he that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words and believe not I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me. He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John xii. 44-50).

Now what it is important to observe is this, that these words are those of Jesus the Son of man, the Jewish peasant who suffered death at the instigation of the rulers of His people, by the authority of the Roman

Governor. Such, whether they were true or false, were the doctrines which He held and published respecting His own fulness of knowledge, and His unerring wisdom. Could he be deceived? Was he unable to read His own consciousness, or was His mind so perverted that He could not perceive the true nature and bearing of the words which he uttered? Or, still worse, is it any way conceivable that, with such awful themes in His heart, He could deliberately intend to lead men astray? It may help us to a conclusion on this solemn subject to remember that He sought to substantiate His claims by an appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures. In the Gospel, according to St. Luke, at the fourth chapter, we have a most interesting account of His preaching in Nazareth. We need not enlarge upon the circumstances of the occasion. He was at home. Often, no doubt, He had beforetimes attended this synagogue; now, He conducts its service. Lately, the signs and wonders which he wrought had made him famous, and the expectation of His hearers was greatly excited. The Scripture which He read was one of the most striking prophecies of the Old Testament. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19). It was no subsequent adaptation on the part of the disciples of Jesus to call this a prediction of the Lord's Messiah. To think of it as being fulfilled in Isaiah himself, or in any one else

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during the seven hundred years since it was first penned had not entered into the minds of the Jewish people of that age. As clearly as the repetition of the Mosaic sacrifices showed that they possessed no inherent value, yet betokened another which should have perfect efficacy so had this and kindred prophecies looked forward to one who should be anointed with "the oil of gladness above his fellows," anointed truly with "the Holy Ghost and with power." Here, again, Christ puts forth His claim. Neither fraud nor fanaticism can be supposed to captivate the soul of the reader on that occasion. The solemnity of the day, of the place, of the exercise of reading that most sacred roll, all forbid the suggestion. Yet Jesus declares "this day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears." What does He mean by this assertion? That with respect to Himself, and no other, had the prophet put these words on record so many centuries before,—that on Him therefore the Spirit of Jehovah had rested as on no other man,—that He was thus inaugurated into the highest office to which humanity could be raised,—that the gift of Divine influence was such as to enrich Him with the highest endowments, and to enable Him to achieve the most glorious results —results, in the sphere of humanity at large, which could only be symbolized by the greatest and most blessed deliverances which had ever been experienced by God's ancient people. "And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Their conduct afterwards, when "they rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that

they might cast Him down headlong" proves two things—that they were not prejudiced in His favour, and therefore their testimony to His "gracious words" was the more valuable; and, further, that it was not either a disbelief in the prophetic character of the quotation, or any incongruity in the professions which He made with the portion which he read, that roused their anger, but only that He did not do what either fraud or fanaticism would have certainly led Him to do, perform some sign in their midst. But His references to the Old Testament as predictive of Himself are many. While affirming the Divine origin and unquestionable authority of the various parts of that volume, He as well testified that its subject was Himself. His appeal to the evidence of the Baptist on His behalf, to the Father, to His own miraculous works, was followed up by a more direct appeal to the holy writings which were the glory of the Jewish people. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me" (John v. 39. 46). Not less were his sufferings foretold than the wonders of His life. "The Son of Man indeed goeth as it is written of Him." "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered" (Matt. xiv. 21. 27). "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must me?" (Matt. xxvi. 53, 54). So again when He walked with the two

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disciples towards Emmaus, He did not, as perhaps we might expect, call them to lay aside their unbelief in obedience to the evidence of the senses—not now did He say, “Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have”—but, “O thoughtless ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Was ever claim like this? What man, in the possession of reason, did ever assert that of himself *all* the Scriptures of the Old Testament from Moses downward were full? Yet such an assertion was made by Jesus Christ. Still further, He claimed on the one hand that while the original revelation was of unquestionable authority and must remain in undiminished force, He Himself possessed equal authority, and had it within His power to expound and adapt that revelation to the altered condition of humanity. Both are expressed in that one utterance. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil” (Matt. v. 17).. What, with any one else, would be insufferable egotism, would be the height of presumption,—snatching at the Divine prerogatives,—is, in the lips of Jesus, reason, goodness, truth. So, too, while He denounced those who taught for “doctrines the commandments of men,” and thus emphasized in the strongest manner the value of that written word which human interpreters made void, He yet added a “hearken unto me,” which showed that He

possessed that right to teach which He denied to them, (Mark vii. 6, 14).

But this brings us particularly to look at the aspect of authority which uniformly His teachings bear, and which in some distinguished cases is the most prominent feature of His discourses. This was what impressed most deeply the multitudes who listened to the sermon on the Mount. "The people were astonished at His doctrine; for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." (Matt. vii, 28, 29). A glance at that wonderful discourse will illustrate the Evangelist's remark. (1) There was the *matter* of His communication. True religion, He shows, does not consist in negative virtues, nor in ceremonial observances, but in the positive and Godward tendencies of the human spirit. So far is it from the former—say from the exactions of justice—that what is allowed by the civil law of the Mosaic economy is forbidden by Christ. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." And so far are ceremonies of religion from constituting its nature, that "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Mat. v. 38, 39, 20, 8, 48.) (2) There was the *manner* of His instruction. Here was the forcefulness of right words, and the power of one behind them that made

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them tell upon the conscience of man from that hour to this. The oft-repeated “I say unto you,” as matters of deepest experience or of practical moment are dwelt upon, is not less authoritative, if less fearful, than the voice of God from the Mount which might be touched. Notice, too, in what a familiar way He speaks of what no man could know but God only, “Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” And observe, further, how penetratingly He looks in upon the human heart, and shows that our disposition, rather than our acts, is the test of true morality: “The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light, but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.” Yet again, “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is thine own eye?” (Matt. vi. 4, 22, 23; vii. 3.) Such words must carry the conviction with them that He who uttered them was none other than that “Lord” who is “God of knowledge,” and with whom “actions are weighed.” (1 Sam., ii, 3.) But (3) the authority of the great teacher is still more impressively taught by the *sanctions* which confirm His word. As one having absolute power to open and to close the entrance to the kingdom of God, He bars it against every one whose righteousness does not surpass that of those who were then esteemed most highly among men. So also He declared that the calling Him Lord, Lord, however much it might seem to be in harmony with those views respecting Himself which He

maintained, would not ensure everlasting life: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in the name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, *depart from me*, ye that work iniquity. (Matt. vii. 21-23). Yet with equal authority does He pronounce the beatitudes, and connect with them, as with his denunciations, the influence of his own name; "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely *for my sake*. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for *so persecuted they the prophets* which were before you." (Matt. v. 11, 12). So at last, in the close of this sermon, we have the final issue of the probation of each one, who has heard these words of Christ, determined by the way in which they have been received. Who is it that is likened to a man who built his house upon a rock, and whose work remained uninjured after the severest tempests? "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them." What man is that whose labor is in vain—whose building rests upon the sand, and who is involved in the "great fall" of it in the testing storm? "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not." Can personal prerogatives be higher than these? Can the sanctions of law be more dread? Can Divine Government be more just, more gracious, or more immutable? Many other passages might be cited to show that this aspect of His teaching was often and most strongly exhibited, and that, in fact, it was never over-

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looked or ignored. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life." (John v. 24). To the enquiry, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And further, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (John vi. 28, 29; viii. 24).

In thus considering the position which the Saviour took, as the Divine Teacher, we are prepared to understand and appreciate the value of His doctrine on other matters. If He claimed to have a perfect knowledge of the mind of God, to expound the true meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures, and yet, on this basis to convey a more complete revelation, on the highest authority, and with the most solemn sanctions, and if He set it forth as at least one principal aim of his coming into the world to afford this important instruction, then assuredly is the religion which bears His name to be judged by the account which he gives of it. Thus indeed may we learn what is the Christianity of Christ. Still further, we may easily ascertain whether this Christianity is the same taught by Peter, or Paul, or John; and whether it is that which exists in our own days. Nay, more, according to the powers of the human mind to discriminate between good and evil, between what is adapted to man's welfare or his disadvantage, his continuance in sin, or his deliverance from moral evil and its consequences, we may be able satisfactorily to answer the question, Is the religion of Christ true, and is it Divine?

II. The next thing, therefore, which we have to notice is *our Lord's doctrine respecting His own personal nature*. This has in part been anticipated; nor could it be otherwise. The idea of such a teacher is founded on the incarnation. If, as we have shown, the words of Christ are the "truth," absolutely, are "spirit and life," are not only the means of salvation, but if faith in Him who utters them is the only condition of salvation, then must it follow that "God was manifest in the flesh," and that "of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace." But we are not left to inference, however numerous may be our facts, however well authenticated, or however fair, or even necessary may be our conclusions. We are not destitute of explicit statement. Christ is not only, on His own showing, central to His own system, but He is so, because He is at once the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Of His proper manhood there was no room to doubt. He was seen, heard, and touched, by friend and foe alike. As a man He reasoned; He was grieved in spirit, and He rejoiced in spirit; and by true volitions of the soul He refused the evil and chose the good. As to His Divine nature, it was truly said by one, "We beheld His glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1, 14). Yet it is true that he did not so display the attributes of Godhead, as to compel man's assent to the doctrine of His proper Deity. He was not, even in His public ministry, always equally explicit on this subject. He sometimes forbade the proclamation of it by those who believed in it. But this may be accounted for by the fact that the

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circumstances of His disciples, and yet more of His countrymen, were such as to require very gradual information on this point. Had he at the first asserted His true Godhead then as their prejudices swayed them, they would either have attempted by force to make Him a temporal king, or they would altogether have refused to hear His words. Both of these results were prevented by the manner in which, in word and in act, Jesus Christ unfolded His infinite Majesty. But it is certain that his final communications were not out of harmony with His earlier ones. It is equally clear that His belief in, or rather knowledge of, His Divine nature was not caused by any enthusiasm of His followers. They, to the very last were far from being enthusiastic in regard to His personal claims. Perpetually they were stumbling over His teachings in this respect. How could they be enthusiastic when He persistently refused to be a national deliverer, and was repeatedly conversing of sufferings and death which lay near before Him? So, altogether misleading is this view, so entirely without warrant, that in His last discourse to His disciples He said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 12, 13).

We have seen that He speaks of Himself as "coming into the world," as being "sent" by "the Father," from whom He "proceeded and came forth." If this does not teach his proper and personal pre-existence, then what does it teach? Unless He meant to deceive, using words in an altogether unnatural manner, He did

assert not only that He had come down from heaven, but that in a real, though inexplicable sense He had ascended to heaven, and was there and on earth at the same time, (John iii. 13). He professed Himself to be greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon, and undoubtedly more ancient than Abraham. The Jews did not regard these claims as at all ambiguous. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham which is dead ? and the prophets are dead ? Whom makest thou thyself?" (John viii. 53).

But Jesus put forth still stronger demands upon faith. He affirms His Lordship over the Sabbath (Matt. xiii. 8), and His ownership of the Temple (Luke xix. 45, 46). In opposition to the chief priests and scribes, He justified the adoration of the Children crying "Hosanna to the Son of David," and quotes as His authority a psalm in which, by the mouths of babes and sucklings, Jehovah is represented as "stilling the enemy and the avenger." (Ps. viii, 1, 2). Not only is He the only way to the Father, and the "truth" itself, but also "the life," and evidently in its most absolute sense, (John xiv. 6). This He explains as having "life in Himself, even as the Father hath life in Himself," and vindicates by the most solemn and weighty words in other places. (John v. 21, 22 ; vi. 48-51 ; x. 27, 28 ; xi. 25.)

But one of the most remarkable occurrences, and one bearing in the most important manner upon this subject, is that which took place at Cesarea Philippi, and is recorded by each of the three first Evangelists—and probably referred to by the fourth. (Matt. xvi.

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14-16, Mark viii. 28, 29, Luke ix. 19, 20, John vi. 66, 69). Our Saviour first enquired, “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” Here He assumed His own proper humanity, and, may we not say His truly representative character? Is there not a reference to the fact that He regarded Himself as more than *a* son of man? as, indeed, that very “seed of the woman,” who should stand as the second covenant head of the race? But the question is forthwith put in a new way. “Whom say ye that I am?” Here we may ask, what was the design of these enquiries? Evidently not to gain the pleasure of popular recognition. Such regard He had steadily declined when pressed upon Him. Not to turn the scale, in a mood of hesitation, when he was desirous of seizing the Messiah’s prerogative, but did not feel certain whether He could then adventure so far. Were this the case, how can it be accounted for that when an answer had been given, “then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.” And more, it is manifest from what soon after followed, that He had no respect for their opinion, however flattering to Himself it might be, if it did not answer to the true nature of things. Thus when Peter offered advice which, judged from a merely human point of view, was friendly and well adapted to His Master’s case, he was met by the scathing rebuke “get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man,” (Matt. xvi. 23).

The design of the Saviour, therefore, in these enquiries, obviously was to teach His disciples. Judging

from the above mentioned instance, had they replied wrongly He would have set them right. But it is evident that He approved of Peter's answer as the voice of the twelve. Not one attribute does He refuse; not one word does he wish to change. Still more, He affirms that such a reply could not have originated with the unaided human spirit. "Flesh and blood"—man—was incompetent to frame an utterance so true, so deep, so high. It came as a revelation. God the Father had Himself so taken away the veil from the heart, and had so shone forth into it as to give the light of the knowledge of His own glory, in the person of His only begotten Son. Hence the saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Moreover so important did our Lord regard this confession that He honoured Peter by entrusting to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and for his guidance in their use declared that upon this rock—that is, the confession of his own true and proper Godhead, as incarnate in human nature—would He build His church, and that against it all the power of the invisible world of evil would not prevail. This was the foundation truth of the gospel to be set forth by Apostolic authority; this the fact to be accepted by individual believers "with the heart unto righteousness," and "confession" of which was, with the mouth, to be "made unto salvation." We cannot too strongly emphasize the importance of the phraseology here employed by Peter, and commended by Christ. It is the key to a great deal besides in the New Testament. If Jesus claimed as Son of Man to be also the Son of God, it shows that there is a proper duality of

they replied. But it is evident as the voice of refuse; not one more, He affirms ed with the un-^d—man—was true, so deep, so the Father had heart, and had the light of the son of His only u art the Christ, so important did honoured Peter the kingdom of se declared that of his own true human nature— against it all the could not prevail. gospel to be set e fact to be ac- the heart unto which was, with on." We cannot e of the phraso- commended by sids in the New f Man to be also proper duality of

natures in His one and indivisible Person. And if on the one hand the former expression is equivalent to the possession of true humanity, so is the other to the possession of true Godhead. It was as the Son of God that He said to the man that had been born blind, "thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee," and that thereupon, as God, He accepted the worship which was paid to Him (John ix. 35, 36). So when the Jews took up stones to cast at Him, their anger was excited by His assertion of such a filial relation subsisting between Him whom they called their God and Himself, as they understood to imply equality with the Father (John viii. 49, 59, x. 30, 31). "For a good work," said they, "we stoned thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou being a man makest thyself God," (Jno. x. 33.) Had they mistaken the sense of His words, it is plain that not only personal safety, but even common honesty would have required an explanation. But this was not attempted. Our Saviour's following words show that they had truly caught His meaning. And further they go upon the supposition that the subject of dispute was quite as grave as they imagined. Nothing indeed would warrant their rendering Divine homage to any one who could not give full proof of His Divinity; but for a similar reason nothing would justify their withholding it, if such proofs were furnished by Him. "If I do not the works of my Father believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him," (John x. 37, 38).

It was as the Son of God, into whose hands all things were delivered of the Father, and whose nature could only be known by the Father, even as the Father could only be known to Himself, and be made known by Him, that He promised to give rest to the soul of the heavy laden; and this, too, while He put Himself forth as the very pattern of meekness, and lowliness of heart, (Matt. xi. 27, 29). No passage in the writings of His disciples, earlier or later, or of those who have claimed, or disclaimed inspiration, seems more strongly to assert the Godhead of Christ than this does. This mutual limitation of knowledge to the Father and Himself; this claim of lowliness, when making such unheard of professions; and this call and the accompanying promise to the weary ones of earth, are wholly incompatible with a merely human, or a created nature. Who but God can look down into the lowest depths of the human soul, and when there is a pressure of guilt, of sin, of fear, of doubt, of despair upon it, can give rest!

Here is something more sublime than stilling a tempest, and something more appropriate and satisfying to the universal experience of mankind, than even multiplying food for the hungry, or curing the diseases of the sick. And, withal, it is brought within the range of certain knowledge—every man may put it to the test for himself.

It is the boast of modern science that it can chain the elements of nature, and constrain the most subtle and irresistible of them to do homage in the service of man. Thankfully may it be admitted that human skill can so adapt its own arrangements as to

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make those elements co-operative, and mutually efficient in the promotion of our comfort. Yet, after all, it is but the potsherd of the earth benefitting his fellow potsherd. The sphere of natural science is but of the earth, earthy. Far be it from us to say a word in disparagement of its true claims. As relating to one department of the works of God, it declares His glory. Rightly viewed, it renders tribute to the profoundest teachings of revelation. Yet it can never minister to a soul diseased. The man of science, as such, has no mathematics to solve the religious problems of the soul; no chemistry to cleanse the stains of its guilt, or purify the fountain of its action; no dynamics to unloose its burdens, to give energy to its good resolutions, or to reverse its downward tendencies. Natural science has no balm for broken hearts, no hope for the departing spirit. In a word, it has no power to intrude within the sphere of spiritual things. Here, man's power to help others, or to help himself, so far as it is simply his own, is utterly unavailing.

But this is the very sphere where the power of Christ is most clearly effective. "Peace," saith He, "I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," (John xiv. 27).

Is creation the work of God? Or is there in the universe a force which is persistent? Then, at least according to the teaching of Christ, He is the Creator, and that force resides in, and emanates from Himself: "My Father," He said, "worketh hitherto and I work," (John v. 17). Undoubtedly no man can "forgive sins

but God only." Yet in His own right Jesus forgave the sins of those who sought Divine mercy at His hands, and, in one notable instance, vindicated His possession of this prerogative, by curing the sick of the palsy with a word. To remove the disease of the body and the condemnation of the spirit, were matters equally easy with Him, (Matt. ix. 2-7). Finally, in proof of His Divine nature He declared that He would raise the dead, sit in judgment upon the human race, and appoint the destinies of every individual. On this ground He demanded "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." In connexion with this statement is another which we must respectfully submit to all those who profess true reverence for the teachings of Christ, yet leave the doctrine of His supreme divinity an open question—one upon which men who truly believe in Him may yet be at variance with each other, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him," (John v. 21-30). This claim, be it further observed was once more put forth at a time when, humanly speaking, it was most unseasonable. Jesus was a prisoner, and placed before the highest tribunal of His nation. "Again the high-priest asked Him and said unto Him, art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" Is it conceivable that either the adulation of His disciples who had all forsaken Him and fled away, or His being "intoxicated with enthusiasm," or His deliberate hypocrisy should prompt the reply, "I am. And ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven?" (Mark xiv. 61, 62). These, most certainly, are "words of

forgave the His hands, possession palsy with ly and the qually easy oof of His se the dead, appoint the und He de- Son, even as with this fully submit he teachings eeme divinity ho truly be- each other, reth not the 1-30). This put forth at a unseasonable. the highest tri- st asked Him the Son of the the adulation and fled away, " or His deli- "I am. And the right hand of heaven?" (Mark are "words of soberness," and they bear internal evidence of being "words of truth," while they undoubtedly are in perfect harmony with all that Jesus elsewhere said respecting Himself. With all these sayings before us, and especially this final assertion of His Godhead made before the high-priest, and under the shadow of His cross, we must arrive at one of two conclusions; either that He did not rise from the dead, and then we cannot believe anything that He said; or that He did rise again and that therefore we cannot disbelieve in His true and proper divinity, and in all that He uttered for our instruction.

III. But this introduces us to another topic—Was the death of Jesus a natural result? Did it come to Him as it comes to us all? or, at most can it be said that either by the malice of the Jews He died a martyr's death, or by His own impetuosity He exasperated the people to slay Him? It cannot be denied that "He suffered under Pontius Pilate," or that "He was dead and buried." But with reference to the reason of the fact very different opinions have been entertained. During the last eighteen centuries the death of Christ has been regarded as the very foundation of the entire system of Christianity. Friends and foes have alike admitted that the crucifixion of Jesus is the one distinguished mark of His religion. Yet this very belief has produced two parties; one that holds it to be the expression of "the wisdom of God and the power of God," and that by it alone is human salvation possible; and another that as strenuously maintains that such an interpretation is altogether untrue, and most derogatory to the Divine perfections.

If we would attain to certainty on this subject—and we cannot afford to remain in doubt—we must not only ask, what saith the scripture? but what saith Christ? His death could not be altogether unforeseen. He could say something about it. He is reported to have frequently spoken of it. Whatever he did say must be of importance to us in coming to a decision whether the views generally held by the Church are right or wrong. Be it much or little that He has said on this subject, it is worthy of our most candid and patient attention.

In His conversation with Nicodemus, great prominence is given by Him to the Divine purpose, in the mission of Jesus. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yet of what specific character was the gift? And how would it conduce to the accomplishment of that end? How would it manifest the love of God, how afford ground for trust to man, and how provide for the removal of human guilt, and the bestowment of life eternal? We are left in no doubt with reference to these questions. In the immediately preceding words our Saviour said "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." One word brings out the full force of the illustration. The Son of Man, who is also the only begotten Son of God did not only come into the world, but *must* be lifted up. This is by the Divine appointment. It is necessary. By this means, and by this alone, the dying live. On this Saviour "lifted up"

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men may look by faith—may believe—and so trusting in Him on whom their help is laid, God's purpose shall be fulfilled, and they shall not perish but have eternal life. Can less than this be the meaning of the passage before us ? If there be some other meaning of these words what point or coherence can be found in them ? Suppose we expunge from them all idea of sacrifice or substitution, then what reason is there for this "must be lifted up" ? What is there in the gift of Divine love on which a guilty sinner can rely for deliverance from condemnation and for eternal life ? What is there to justify the Supreme Ruler—"a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He"—in remitting the penalty of sin and bestowing His favour upon the utterly unworthy ? Nay, more, if the only begotten Son of God "must be lifted up," and yet human salvation does not depend upon any such sacrifice how can this be reconciled with the goodness of God, much less be made the highest expression of it ? If the design of Christ's death is only to lead men to reflection, and to sorrow for sin, then seeing the atonement is denied, we fail to discover how His sufferings can have any such effect. They do not demonstrate that sin is "exceeding sinful." But besides, no mention is here made of any such design as this. Let this reflection and godly sorrow be supposed. What then ? The problem now comes up for solution, and presses home upon the heart of the sinner : "How can man be just with God?" The awakened conscience is on the side of right, of law, of judgment. How, without weakening this moral safeguard, can pardon be hoped

for? "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" Read our Saviour's "whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," in the light of a Divinely appointed, and Divinely efficacious sacrifice for sin, and the question is satisfactorily answered at once; but read this passage without any reference to a propitiation and the more thoughtful the person is, the more will he be perplexed, the more will he despair.

Our Lord's utterance, upon this important occasion, constituted the key-note of the strain which underlies the whole of His teaching. Looking at His death as a mere matter of fact, we see how constantly, throughout His public Ministry, it was before his mind. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again" (John 11. 19). Peter's celebrated confession in Cesarea Philippi was evidently the opening of a new chapter in the disciples' history, and "from that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt xvi. 21). So a second time, while they were passing through Galilee, Jesus said unto them, "the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again." (Matt. xvii. 22, 23). A third time, and still more circumstantially, "Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief Priests and unto the Scribes, and they shall

condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him, and the third day He shall rise again." (Matt. xx. 17-19). Another most interesting notice of his death is given in John xii. 23-33. Certain Greeks who had come to worship at Jerusalem desired to see Him. This was told to our Saviour by Andrew and Philip, and in view of that glory which He was so soon to achieve, and which was thus foreshadowed He said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;" "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." Words cannot more definitely express the necessity of the death of Christ to the success of His mission, or the certainty of His glory as resulting from His sufferings on the cross. It was not an afterthought then to put the death of Christ into so prominent a position in His religion. While men were thinking of His assumption of an earthly kingdom, of His power and glory in it, and of sitting on His right hand and on His left, He was thinking of the agony and the death—the crown of thorns, the cross, and the pouring out of His soul—by which the foundations of His spiritual kingdom were to be laid. "Even" said He, in dispelling the illusion which hung so heavily upon their minds, "as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28). But as He often dwelt upon the fact of His death, not seldom did He give information respecting its purpose.

Our Saviour was a Jew, and exercised His ministry

among the Jewish people. They were familiar with sacrifice, and had been taught that the blood was the life of the victim, and that it was appointed upon the altar to make atonement for the life of the offerer, forfeited by sin (Lev. xvii. 11). They knew that reconciliation with God was thus effected, and that, in virtue of this fact, the worshipper of Jehovah was permitted to commune with Him, by partaking of certain portions of several of the sacrifices. Bearing this in mind, we may easily perceive, what otherwise must prove inexcusable, the deep significance of those words which were spoken by our Saviour "in the Synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum:"—"the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him" (John vi. 55, 56). Among His hearers, as now among ourselves there were some who regarded this as "a hard saying," and who openly showed their dissatisfaction with it; "from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with him." But no intimation was added to soften the expression, or to win back the favour of the offended ones. This itself is sufficient to prove that the doctrine of the Saviour's death was not, even when taught by Himself, adapted naturally to produce that penitence which is claimed to have been its chief purpose; much less that for this purpose did He dwell upon this important event.

Again, He represents Himself as the Redeeming Shepherd. He came that His sheep might have life, and might have it more abundantly. For them He lays down His life, for without His consent, His self sacrifice, "no one" can take it away. And that what would be an act of unwarrantable presumption in any other person is not so in His case, that He has the right to lay it down, He affirms, by asserting likewise that He has the right to take it again. For this act also He claims the concurrence and the delight of the Father, "therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. . . . This commandment have I received of my Father" (John x. 17, 18). This language makes our Lord's death a substitutionary offering; or it gives perplexity for instruction, and that in regard to a fact which it is most essential we should understand. Explained by any other theory it fails entirely. Let the death of Christ be but that of a martyr; let it be that of a sympathiser with, or a partaker of human sorrows; let it be the death of one who happens to come into contact with the never ending and ever victorious moral evil which this world is said to present, or the suffering of a pure soul that would, for the benefit of others, feel the degradation and misery which they have entailed upon themselves—let any one, or all of these be accepted, yet so as to leave out the suffering of "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God"—and we say that the words do not, and cannot convey such a sense. What martyr, what merely human friend speaks of His right to suffer? Or asserts that he lays down his life, that it was not taken

away from him, but that it is surrendered by his own act, and that he will in token of this rise from the dead? Which of them has presumed to say that he suffers in order to give life to others, that in this he is acting under the command of God, and for this is specially beloved of the Father? The teaching of Christ here shows how He stands thus absolutely alone.

In the midst of His disciples, too, at the Old Testament feast of the Passover, He proclaims Himself the Mediator of the New Covenant. For Him and for them the occasion was one of the deepest solemnity. It was just before His betrayal and final agony. But the hand of violence was not yet upon Him, and they were alone. Previous instruction had prepared the way, and now He spoke very plainly. Was it merely accidental that they should sit down together, for the last time, at this feast? Listen to the great teacher: "And He said, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. . . . And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them saying, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke xxii. 15-20). The reference in the latter part of the passage is undoubtedly to His death, the great event so near at hand, and this again in the former part connects that event with the Jewish Passover. As the blood of the paschal lamb had aforetime been the means of rescuing a nation from destruction, and of bringing

them into covenant relation to God, so was the blood of Christ to be the means of salvation from the ruin of sin, and of introducing believers in Christ into the New Covenant of Divine mercy. As the first was kept in memory by the paschal supper, so was the last to be kept in memory by the Lord's supper. Both, too, were seals, no less than signs, of the covenants which they represented. Thus is explained the Saviour's great desire to keep this feast with His disciples just before His death. He might thus assert once for all, and stamp it on the very constitution of Christianity, that his death is propitiatory, substitutionary, and redemptive. Wherever His doctrine should be proclaimed there would this ordinance be observed, in remembrance of Him; and wherever it was observed there would be the confession "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." Here would be the connecting link between the types of the Old, and the antitype of the New Testament; and here, for ever, a protest against shifting the foundation of our faith from the death of Christ to His birth, or His life. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," says an inspired commentator, "show ye" or "ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). On a review of this feature of the teaching of Christ our only wonder may be that the disciples did not sooner grasp His meaning. And yet we have the counterpart of this around us to-day. There was, and still is, an offence to the pride of intellect, as well as to the depraved appetites and passions of men, in the cross of Christ. Yet no philosophy, no criticism, no judgment of the lively oracles of God on the ground of our intuitions

can shake the doctrine of Christ's atoning death. It is inseparably connected with His own teaching, and with His own Person. Unless these can be disproved, this can never be made void. Happy shall we be if we cannot only go with Him into the garden, to the judgment hall, and to the cross, but can also witness His triumph over death and the grave, and consent at length to le that "thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations" (Luke xxiv. 46, 47).

IV. Hence we are brought to consider another department of our Lord's teaching—that which concerns *His resurrection from the dead, and His Mediatorial rule.*

No founder of a religious system has ever promised to exert personal effort on its behalf, after his death. But Jesus Christ did this. It was not simply that He predicted universal diffusion and final supremacy for His faith and worship—though even this has been justly regarded as a proof of His Divinity—but He taught that most assuredly He Himself would give the necessary aid to carry out His purposes.

We have seen that He taught His disciples that He would rise from the dead. It is no proof that such teaching was ambiguous, that they did not understand or believe in His resurrection. It was more than His disciples hoped for; but it was what His enemies felt that they had good ground to fear: "We remember that this deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again" (Matt. xxvii. 63).

But Jesus went much further than the simple statement of the fact. He foretold two things which were not only unlike in themselves, but apparently contradictory, yet each of which He would Himself fulfil in order to the propagation of His religion: He would act for His disciples in heaven, and He would act with them on earth. Look at the latter of these first. During his public ministry it was the expectation of His followers that He would continue with them and that He would reign on the earth. There was a sense in which he would do so. He therefore not unfrequently spoke in a strain suitable to this view. His discourses on the kingdom of God—on its small beginning, its certain increase and its ultimate triumph—are illustrative of this. But towards the close, He was much more unreserved. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John xiv. 18, 19, 23, xv. 4). "These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but, be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John xvii. 33).

Yet on the other hand, Jesus certainly spoke of being absent from them, of going away, and of the ex-

pediency of His departure, that He might in heaven prosecute the work which on earth he had began among them. "I go to prepare a place for you." "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I that He shall take of mine and shail show it unto you (John xiv. 2, 16, 26, xvi. 14, 15). Thus did our Saviour assert His departure from this world, while yet He promised to abide with His disciples. It was fitting and even necessary, He taught, that He should go away; it was equally necessary that He should remain with them; while their continued safety and happiness depended on their remaining in Him, and in as close a relationship as that which exists between the tree and its living, fruitful branches. Christ promised both, and not alternately, but at once. The two things may indeed seem incompatible, and to one less than omnipresent they undoubtedly are so; yet what we desire to keep before the mind is, that Jesus, knowing this, did certainly make the two-fold promise, and that He also made the success of His cause to depend upon the fulfilment of each part of that promise. The explanation can only be found in His true and proper Divinity and no less in His true and proper humanity. In the latter, though absent from His disciples, He "appears in the presence

of God" for them; and in the former everywhere present and everywhere active—all seeing and all powerful. He is with those who believe in Him "to the end of the world."

Such claims as these are wholly unexampled. The world has, elsewhere, known nothing in any way comparable to them. They transcend, infinitely, the aspirations of the sectary, or the dreams of the fanatic. And they are as calm and pure as they are exalted. The words of a mere man they could not be. They breathe the very equality with God which they assert. Still further, as they are in perfect harmony with all that has preceded in the teaching of Christ, so are they with another doctrine which He advanced, and with which His ministry may be said, fittingly to have closed. Long before He had declared that "the Father judgeth no man, but had committed all judgment to the Son," and, as in other cases, He had followed up one wonderful saying with another still more astonishing: "marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 22, 28-29). Subsequently, on the Mount of Olives, while he discoursed of the end of the Jewish state and the fall of Jerusalem He looked forward through these events to the end of the world, and declared, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one

from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). But in circumstances still more affecting was His final testimony to be given. After His betrayal, He had been seized and borne away to the house of the high priest. In vain had false witnesses testified against Him. Not even to those who were resolved to shed His blood had a sufficient evidence of crime been alleged. Then the high priest took the matter into his own hands and said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" This was not a moment for empty boasting or for unauthorised pretension. Yet, "Jesus said unto him, thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64). There was no mistake about the meaning of these words, and no want of proof now. He had professed Himself the Messiah, the Son of God, the Supreme Judge. From any mere man this would have been an obvious invasion of the Divine rights, and Caiaphas pronounced it blasphemy because in no other light than a mere man would he regard the prisoner before him. "Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now, ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death" (Matt. xxvi. 65, 66). A martyr to the truth our Saviour undoubtedly was; but that truth was His own proper and absolute Divinity, and the mediatorial work and reward which belonged to Him as "made in the likeness of men." And though

this was not all that appeared in His death, yet it is most instructive to us that He set such a value upon the truth, and that He put the truth respecting Himself in such a prominent position before us. One other word on this subject He has given us. As He had just testified to the Jewish people through their representative, so again He addresses the Gentiles through the Roman Governor "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. **EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE**" (John xviii. 37). This is pre-eminently His testimony to us. It acknowledges all that is trustworthy in the tests which true science and a sound philosophy have in these latter days produced, and it submits to them for examination in perfect confidence that the result will be the acceptance of Christ, and of Christianity in Him.

Here we must draw to a close; but if our reasoning has been of any value it has assuredly brought us to certain conclusions :

1st. That religious truth is to us a matter of the greatest importance. It is adapted to the highest faculties of our nature. It is necessary to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul. It alone reveals to us true excellence, and affords at once the means and the motives to its attainment. If we have this, then may we rejoice in resources which are really illimitable. If we go without it, then, words do not suffice to indicate our destitution. And yet, strange to say; this is the subject which awakens most jealousy, most hostility, in the present day. Religious truth is doubted, and, of course, re-

ligious teaching is disparaged and despised. Sometimes the Christian preacher is likened to the foolish man who builds his house on the sand, sometimes he is put on a level with heathen priests and soothsayers, and sometimes he is charged with spending precious time and fair abilities in a sphere where much real work has to be done, in the worse than useless occupation of splitting hairs. But as there is eyesight in man and light externally adapted to it, so "there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." There is religious truth somewhere; and while we have no sympathy with a narrow-minded, superstitious, or illogical pietism, we yet maintain that it is possible to "know" this "truth," and that while system is the very perfection of science, in other departments of learning, it is still more so in Theology, which is the crown and perfection of all the sciences. To enable us to grasp the great principles of this science, and to trace out their wonderful harmonies in the government of God, and especially in the redemption of mankind, was one of the great reasons for the incarnation; and to be engaged in this study in one of the most necessary as well as one of the noblest employments in which the human intellect can be exercised.

2nd. There is dogmatic religious truth. By this we mean that there is something stated to be believed; something defined to be accepted, something affirmed, "delivered once for all to the saints," which is not to be questioned but trusted; not to be held with certain mental reservations which explain it away, but to be embraced with the whole heart, as "worthy of all acceptation."

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But dogma rests upon no merely human authority. It is the word which God sent "preaching peace by Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all." Not unfrequently has the Christian Ministry been charged with blind credulity, on the one hand, or spiritual tyranny on the other, because it has held fast to a system of "doctrine" as "sound," and has maintained that there is a vital connexion between this and "godliness." Ominously prevalent of late has been the tendency to make light of articles of faith, and to place in opposition to them Christian love, purity, and usefulness. The methods of preaching, too, have been the subjects of many "lay sermons;" and the ambassador of Christ has been told to imitate his Master in simplicity of thought, and felicity of parabolic illustration, in the inculcation of true morality, in detecting and exposing hypocrisy, in comforting the sorrowful and in promoting harmony among all men. For all such counsel we ought to be thankful. It is well, doubtless, that the pulpit should occasionally hear from the pew. As there is no reply made to sermonic addresses, there is danger of the Christian teacher becoming in some respects too positive, and in others of being forgetful of his very practical calling. It is quite conceivable that the preaching of the Christian pulpit may be interesting enough to the speaker, but dry, hard, unsympathetic, and worthless to the hearer. But there is danger undoubtedly also on the other side. We must indeed aim at Scriptural holiness, and that embodies "whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report," but we must aim at it as Christ did. If he spake by parable, and in soothing or encouraging words,

He also spake—as we have just seen—of the principles of the Divine rule, of the method of salvation, and of the final judgment. Specially, He spoke of Himself—as at once the centre and the source of Dogmatic truth. Here then we must lay our foundation. Whatever Christ taught, we must teach. As He insisted on it, so must we. Notwithstanding the reproaches of unreasonable men, He simply went on commanding Himself “ to every man’s conscience in the sight of God ;” and we must do the same. We must preach Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ crucified, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, if we would justify our position as preachers of the gospel ; *for Christ is Christianity*. Everything bearing on the true knowledge of God, everything connected with the relation of one man to another, everything touching the progress of humanity, everything stretching out into the eternal future, has its root in Christ, or has no root at all. If the system which originated with Him, and which makes Him first and last, fails us, then all is lost. This is acknowledged even by those who think Christianity is a failure. Nor can it be otherwise. If He is not Divine, we could not know the Divine were He to appear before us, or to speak to us. If He has given us no inspiration to goodness, in requiring us to love Him supremely, then can there be no power that will work in us both to will and to do of God’s good pleasure. And, if Christ has not brought life and immortality to light then there never can arise a glimmer of hope with reference to the future. If any, with these teachings of Christ before them, still refuse to accept His Divinity, to believe in His atoning

death, or to accept the proof of His resurrection, we must remind them that Himself hath said, " If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled, They hated me without a cause." (John xv. 22, 25).

3rd. But Christ, the great teacher, was truly Divine, and His supernatural power, exerted at the first, is the secret of the perpetuation of the Christian religion till the present time. This also is the pledge of its universal triumph. Calmly did He look forward to its success. Not but that He foresaw, for He foretold, the conflict which would be waged against it. But it was the mustard seed cast into the soil, which would grow. It was the leaven introduced into the meal, and would leaven the whole lump. So it has been. Times have changed. Nations have been swept away. New political institutions have risen up. Science has achieved wonderful results. Invention has quite altered the condition of society since Christ dwelt in Nazareth, or walked by the sea of Galilee. Yet His religion is with us to-day. It is precisely the same dogma, experience, life, which eighteen hundred years ago was manifested in Peter and those of the circumcision who believed; in Paul, and the converts from paganism which God gave him, from Antioch to Corinth, and from Corinth to Rome, and which has never failed to find representatives and ornaments among the civilized and the barbarian, the bond and the free, from that day to this.

Nor can the progress of this religion be stayed by

any conceivable antagonism. Men may refuse its overtures, but the worst will be their own. The avowed or concealed "enemies of the cross of Christ" may "set themselves" with open hate, perverted zeal, or enticing words of men's wisdom, "against the Lord and against His anointed," but, as of old, "he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." Christians, too, may be to blame—may be selfish, faithless, inconstant. But Christ Himself shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth. "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." And the principles of the growth and triumph of His kingdom are, like the ordinances of heaven, "settled for ever." The final victory is to be achieved not by fire, or sword; not by plague, or pestilence; not by miraculous intervention, whether in the heaven above, or on the earth beneath. As before His personal advent, in the language of the prophets, His voice might be heard saying: "I, even I, am He that doth speak; behold, it is I;" so now to those who at His own call are engaged in "preaching the gospel," in "making disciples" by "baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever" He has "commanded them"—to all such He says, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This is enough. In the use of these means success is pledged. Hence every doubt. "Speak, Lord, thy servants hear."

PREACHING CHRIST:

A SERMON DELIVERED BEFORE THE THEOLOGICAL UNION OF
MOUNT ALLISON WESLEYAN COLLEGE,

BY THE
REV. W. C. BROWN.

SERMON

PREACHING CHRIST.

"BUT WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED."—1 Cor. 1: 23.

Both the matter and method of apostolic preaching are of interest in every age. The men who began to rear the great edifice known as the Christian church, are worthy of regard, not only as depositaries of truth, but as wise master builders. They had to contend with the same difficulties which we meet. Scepticism, pride of intellect, prejudice, indifference were in the world then as now, and we may well ask by what means did these early preachers carry on their great work so successfully against such opposition? It is to this subject we address ourselves to-day, believing that we find in it, not only hints for our own guidance but also a proof of the divine origin of the Gospel and a pledge of its future success. We notice

1. They did not busy themselves with the *evidences* of Christianity but preached Christ.

Their method was not the continual reiteration of those external evidences which prove the divine origin of the Gospel, but the plain and forcible proclaiming of the doctrines themselves. "The Jews required a sign."

They wished a miracle of such dazzling splendour as would carry instantaneous conviction. It is not easy to conceive of miracles more splendid than those wrought by the Saviour, or of powers more ample than those given by Him to His disciples; but neither did they exercise their own powers for the gratifying of these Jews, nor direct their attention to the miracles already wrought. You have doubtless noticed this, and wondered why they did not at least appeal more frequently to their own miracles or those of Jesus. The only rational answer is that they did not need to. They were commissioned to preach great truths to the hearts and consciences of men. Their preaching was attended with the power of the Holy Ghost. The miracles wrought were enough to awaken attention. The next thing to awaken was conviction. This done the penitents embraced Christ. Their hearts were renewed. They received the witness in themselves, and the great miracle was wrought which revealed Christ to them as "the power of God."

The external evidences of revealed religion are conclusive. To the candid mind this proof leaves scarcely any thing to be desired. It would be well if, this evidence being once presented, the whole subject could be dismissed and the full strength of the church given to the preaching of Christ. But the Jews still "seek after a sign." Human thought is in a state of unrest. The old objections occur to modern minds. They come up in new forms, sometimes in forms so new as to make them seem like new objections. They are answered, and

thus each century has produced its own form of objection and its own form of answer, and we see no reason why this may not go on for centuries to come.

The advantage in this conflict is ever with the church, and there has certainly not yet been a single objection urged that has not met with a sufficient answer. The conflict, though severe and violent, is never doubtful. And yet it is not by this battle, however complete the victory, that the church's prosperity is secured or her real conquests pushed. The prosperity of a nation is not created on the battle field even when decisive victory crowns its gallant soldiers. Prosperity grows in the corn-field, in the reclaimed wilderness, in the busy workshops, in the mart of merchandise, in the halls of learning, in the walks of literature, in the spreading cities. And so the chief work necessary in the progress of the church is far other than the mere defence of the truth. It is the reclaiming of sinners, the bringing of redeemed man to the feet of the loving Saviour, the development of virtue in believers, the planting of the Christian faith in all lands, and the elevating of mankind into the mind and life of Christ. This was the high task to which the apostles addressed themselves. In the prosecution of this task, they heeded not the demand of the Jews for a sign. They pointed not to the miracles of themselves or the Saviour. They preached "Christ and Him crucified."

2. They sought no alliance with or support from the wisdom of the world. This whole passage is a positive and emphatic refusal on the part of Paul of such alliance, and a firm resolve to adhere to the simplicity

of the Gospel, and to preach only that which Christ had sent him to preach. As he could not bow to the Jewish clamour for the external form of revelation, and present brilliant miracles to every one who demanded this as a condition of his accepting the gospel, so he could not bow to the imperious request of the Greek to have the truths of the Gospel embodied in philosophic form, or dressed in philosophic garb. He would neither seek to sustain it by philosophical proof nor set it forth with rhetorical art.

He was right. The Gospel must stand upon its own merits, and those merits are quite a different thing from agreement with a system of philosophy. It is not part of a great human plan; it is divine. It comes not to complete what the wisdom of the world had begun, or to supplement some grand achievement of science, but to do what the world, by wisdom, could not do. Hence it is not by an endeavour to expound the doctrines of Christianity philosophically that the progress or permanence of the Christian faith is secured. Those who have attempted this have done but little for religion by their attempts. Their best work has been but defence and much of it, even as defence, has failed. It scarcely touches the great distinctive doctrines of Christianity. The being and attributes of God, the immortality of the soul, and the justness and importance of Christian ethics have been discussed by such teachers with great wisdom, but every attempt to expound philosophically the wondrous plan of human redemption has utterly failed. The sacred mystery of the incarnation is a mystery still. The value of the blood of Christ has found no scientific

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explanation. The new birth is still a stumbling block. Precious talents have been wasted in attempts to explain the inexplicable. Men grapple in vain with problems which inspiration itself has never sought to solve, and labor in vain to expound things which the Bible declares "hard to be understood," and the full explanation of which it leaves amongst the "secret things" which "belong to God."

The apostles never attempt to rest the claims or teachings of Christianity upon a philosophical basis. They did not because it was impossible for them to rest there. The religion of Christ is supernatural and divine. It was a revelation, not a discovery. The reasons for it are hidden in the mind of God. The things revealed in it, belong to a region which the human mind cannot explore. The dictum "that nature is uniform in its operations everywhere," will not serve here. Nature to us is nature as we know it, and this nature may furnish illustrations in endless variety, but it furnishes no clue to the mystery of the true Jehovah, no explanation of "God manifest in the flesh," no statement of the reason why human sin could not be forgiven "without shedding of blood," or how the death of Christ was a satisfaction full and complete, in virtue of which the just God is the "Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Paul did not, therefore, seek to ally himself with the philosophy of his age, or affect its methods, or even profess any familiarity with its teachings. He might have culled many excellent precepts from gentile books. He might have taken refuge under the wing of some great Grecian school of philosophy when teaching the

spirituality of God, and the immortality of the human soul, finding there something at least to countenance both. He could have found many opinions which, centuries afterwards, were used confidently by Christian teachers as buttresses of the truth. By such a course he might have conciliated the Greeks, or at least have won their attention, perhaps their respect. But Paul saw in all this a grave peril, and he eschewed it with the utmost care. He knew that there was truth as well as falsehood in philosophy. He doubtless held it in some esteem. It aimed at high things; but it had failed in the great search. "The world by wisdom knew not God." The sphere of wisdom was really different from the sphere of religion. *It was "of the earth, earthy."* Christ's work was divine. Paul's commission was divine. Christ had revealed God; brought life and immortality to light; made reconciliation "by the blood of His cross" between God and man; become the way of man's approach to God; promised a change in man's moral nature so radical as to entitle him who becomes the subject of it to be called "a new creature" and affirmed, in due time, the resurrection of the long slumbering dead. All this Paul was commissioned to teach. It was foolishness to the Greek. He knows it. He cannot help it. He can simply preach on. He cannot modify the Gospel to suit prevailing opinions or tests. He may not even give it scientific form—teaching it with the "wisdom of words." His method is expressed in his own language. "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I

determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He utterly refuses any alliance with philosophy. The Gospel, in his opinion, is not thus to be defended or expounded. It cannot be united to the wisdom of the world without harm. No! no! "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The simple utterance of the truth, as it is in Jesus, is the weapon which in the hand of God has in every age been "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds."

3. But there is a positive side to this statement. "We preach Christ." There was, on the part of these great men, not only a prudent distrust of doubtful auxiliaries, but also a firm and fearless proclaiming of doctrines scorned by the heedless world. It was an unpopular theme, exciting both hostility and derision, but they addressed themselves to it without either shame or fear. How they preached Christ we may judge from the fragments of their discourses which have come down to us, and from the manner in which they wrote of Him. The substance of their teaching is found in their epistles —found there, not in the impassioned utterances of an excited orator, but in the calm, deliberate, and well-weighed statements of the thoughtful writer. Here we have their best thought in their calmest language, written sometimes in the quiet of their solitary prison. Here we shall find, in precise and accurate language their "knowledge of the mystery of Christ."

And what do we find? Look through the epistles of Paul. To the Roman church he distinguishes between what Christ was "according to the flesh," and

that higher nature—"Son of God"—declared in His resurrection. To the church, in Philippi, he affirms that Christ, before His incarnation, was "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" and that after His humiliation He was again exalted, until even at His human name—the name of His manhood "every knee shall bow in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth." To the Colossians he declares that Christ is "the image of the invisible God," and that by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him." "In Him," he says, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But we need not multiply quotations. Everywhere throughout these epistles he associates Christ with the Father as the giver of peace and grace, speaks of Him as "our Lord," and declares Him to be "the Judge of quick and dead." We make no comment upon these words. We merely offer them as indicating the way in which Paul preached Christ. We are not surprised that such preaching was "to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling block."

But still more. He gave special prominence to the point which, to the world, was most objectionable. He preached not Christ only, but "Christ crucified." He dwelt with special emphasis upon the death of Christ, and even upon the mode of his death. To ordinary men and under ordinary circumstances there would be the constant temptation to make the life, deeds and discourses of Christ the chief feature of their teachings. They

would naturally wish to show the lofty moral precepts which he taught ; his deep insight into the human heart ; the ease with which he parried every attempt of his foes to entangle him in his talk ; the calm and steady confidence with which he moves along the highest plane of human thought ; the deep paths of his subdued yet impassioned utterances ; the wondrous disclosures which he makes of human destiny ; the scathing words in which he rebukes human baseness ; and the delicate tenderness with which, by word or touch, he would bind up the broken-hearted in every age and place. On this ground they might have stood unabashed. To these proofs of his greatness they might have pointed with pride. Here was something which the proudest philosopher could not despise. The apostles might have dwelt with special emphasis upon these things ; and it were easy for them to show that, in intellectual strength, elevation of mind, nobleness of character, and excellence of his moral teachings Jesus was supreme to all those who had hitherto enjoyed the homage of the world.

To all this however these first Christian teachers gave a subordinate place. "We preach Christ *crucified*," —not Christ the great teacher but the suffering Saviour ; not the man of kingly thought, but the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" not his great power but his mysterious passion. The fact which one would naturally wish to cover in oblivion—his death on the cross—is made specially prominent. That which, more than any thing else made him a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, is the very theme of Paul's preaching—the very object of his boast.

Now there was surely some weighty reason why the preference was given, in the apostolic preaching to what the world would call the baser features of this wondrous history. Why should they preach Christ *crucified* if it were not that his death was a sacrifice, and made an atonement for human sins? It is this alone that makes it important. That he died has nothing in it to commend a great teacher. All men die. What though he died a cruel and shameful death! That unhappily has not been an uncommon fate of great teachers—shame to this heedless, sinful world! If, therefore, the gospel had been only a revelation and Christ only a teacher, then his death required no more than a passing notice and need have awakened neither special interest on the part of his disciples nor special hostility or contempt on the part of others. If the “man Christ Jesus were only a great teacher it was unimportant whether the world treated him as it had commonly treated its great teachers, Jewish and Gentile, or otherwise. The thing most offensive to proud and sensitive ears might have been kept in the back ground or, at most, occasionally and delicately alluded to. And if mentioned thus there was nothing in it at which a Greek needed to take offence. Had not Socrates been put to death? Then why not Jesus? The difference explains everything. Socrates was a teacher, Christ was Saviour. The might of the former was his teaching; the might of the latter was his death.

Hence it was the death of Christ that Paul makes the theme of his ministry. The thing most offensive is made most prominent. The reason for this can only

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be that the *despised* work of Christ was his *great* work,—that his death was even more important than his life. It was in this that the wisdom of God and the power of God silently co-operate. It was from this should issue results the long sweep of which shall be felt in the farthest clime and reach through every coming age; and whilst the supreme wisdom of Christ's teachings, the tender sympathy of his heart, and the overpowering grandeur of his perfect virtue, shall impress every generation and form the moral standard for all time, yet his death must have the first place in Christian teaching as the mighty hinge upon which human destiny turns, and Christian preachers must, if true to their calling, preach not only Christ but *Christ crucified*.

Thus even the casual utterance of Paul is directly doctrinal. The divinity and atonement of Jesus gleam forth from his commonest expressions. These great and vital truths were uppermost in his mind, and therefore run like a thread of gold through all the tissue of his deep and weighty epistles. Words which were designed merely to teach the manner in which he performed the high duties of his sacred office come to us freighted with the mighty thought which had taken possession of his mind and woven itself into his interior life,—that "Christ," the God-man, "died for our sins."

4. But we learn also from this passage that the province of revealed religion, like the preacher's mission, is restricted. It was not designed to make manifest every phase of the power and wisdom of God, but only that form of these attributes which is revealed in Christ. The Gospel has one purpose—human salvation. It pre-

sents the true remedy for the world's ruin. It seeks man's deliverance. This is its true sphere, and in this sphere it stands alone in solitary and unapproachable grandeur. The great truth which it teaches is that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Its special province is to enlighten the mind with spiritual knowledge; to bring ease to the troubled conscience, to purge man "from dead works to serve the living God," and to refine the human heart into gentleness and purity. The church is not indifferent to worldly knowledge, much less opposed to it. The most ardent devotion and deepest piety are quite compatible with the most extensive learning. Faith is only the counterpart of human knowledge reaching from the farthest limit of human discovery onward to things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," even to the heart of the Creator. But it is sin and those forms of ignorance which keep man out of God that the Gospel assails, and that knowledge which leads to God, through Christ, that it inculcates. To this Paul limited himself, content to appear even as knowing nothing more. 1 Cor. 2: 2.

It is possible to misconceive the purpose of revealed religion, and to speak of it as if it intermeddled with all knowledge, checking its growth in one direction and encouraging growth in another, refusing its sanction to this class of studies and giving its sanction to that. It does not. It no more seeks to lay the hand of restriction upon the progress of science than to incorporate worldly wisdom into itself. Their spheres are different. Science deals with nature. The Gospel has to do with

grace. Science turns to material things; religion to spiritual ones. Science teaches the starry depths above us, with their infinite mysteries, and the dull earth beneath us, rich in historic treasures, the structure of plants and the mechanism of living creatures wherein is the breath of life. But it mindeth not the high things of the soul and its salvation. It shrinks from the great task of searching the vast spiritual regions, or finding out the mind of God, and confesses "such knowledge is too wonderful for *me*, it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

It is, however, with this high knowledge that the Gospel starts. Planting its foot upon the topmost round of human attainments it reaches up into the dim uncertain regions where philosophy may not tread. Its teachers have received "not the spirit of the world but the spirit which is of God," that they "might know the things which are freely given to them of God." The gospel is divine, and so long as the church understands its high and sacred mission it will neither envy the progress of science nor lift the foot of pride against it.

4. In its legitimate work the gospel is always successful. It is not *really* what to the prejudiced Jew or the sceptical Greek it *appears* to be. "It is the power of God and the wisdom of God." "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The proof of wisdom and power is that they effect great triumphs in the face of great difficulties. Superior wisdom perceives, a plan at which inferior wisdom shakes its head incredulously. Yet the plan succeeds. Power—not force, but a subtle thing which defies definition—is grandest when it surmounts difficulties thought insuper-

able, by means pronounced wholly inadequate. Then the foolish things confound the mighty. Thus it was with the plan of salvation. It accomplished work which sages and conquerors could not perform. It continues it. We attest the actuality of the salvation. Not only is there in the gospel a purpose of saving man, but it really accomplishes that purpose in every instance of faith.

This success may justly be regarded as a proof of its divine origin. It started with a character which excited contempt, yet without altering its nature or methods to meet the prejudices of man or in any way conciliate him it won its way from land to land and from age to age. Why? There is but one answer. It was a divine provision for human needs. It was "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

It might be urged that, after all, this success was due to the fact that the Gospel was skillfully adapted to secure the respect of the best of mankind. It may be so. But it is a fact not to be forgotten that the so-called best of mankind were the very ones who rejected it. To the Jews it was a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. If these words accurately represent the feelings of the average Jew and Greek towards Christianity, then the secret of its success lies somewhere else. The fact is that the world did not take hold of Christianity, it took hold of the world. No nation or sect of philosophers accepted it at once and pushed it upon the notice of mankind. No number of influential persons conspired to lift it into popularity. Nearly three centuries elapsed before any public notice was taken of the Christian faith.

except to persecute it as a pestilent sedition. The world was **against** it. Yet it seized the minds of men, forced itself upon the conscience, wrought a change in every believing heart, and sent forth the happy and regenerated convert, at once its sample and its advocate.

Here lies its security still; not in the favor of thrones, the sanction of philosophy, or even the attestation of miracles, but in itself—that it is the divine remedy for sin, that it brings deliverance to the captive, light to the blind, power to the weak, a realized “salvation to every one that believeth.” It bears the marks of divinity in its work. It has succeeded and still succeeds in the very best sense of the word. It has made bad men good, elevated the character of nations, and filled the lands of its sway with blessed and holy charities. From age to age it held its way, conquering every obstacle. Neglected by the great, despised by the wise, rejected by the moralist, persecuted with bitter hostility, it still survived; achieved successes; vindicated its claims; showed, by results its infinite vitality; and, little by little, wrung reluctant praises even from its foes. They wondered at its unparalleled energy. Only believers knew the secret of its strength. “It is the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

The Christian of the nineteenth century may be pardoned if he look backward in triumph and speak loftily of this divine religion. There is room for boasting. To glory in the cross does not require so much discernment now as it did in Paul’s day. Its power is manifest to all. Over the past centuries the Christian faith has shed its mighty spirit. Silently like the wide-

spread beneficence of God it has spread, without clamour or vain display advancing, bearing to man the choicest fruit of spiritual and social blessings. As when some fountain upspringing from the bosom of the everlasting hills, rich in the forces of nature, flows down to the plain, spreading verdure along its banks, imparting fertility to the meadows, giving drink to the beasts of the field, and moving the ponderous machinery which lightens human labor, so this fountain of life from the bosom of God has blessed man in a thousand ways. "Christ crucified" has renewed the face of society though its triumphs are not yet complete.

5. Finally, its past successes inspire us with confidence. We cannot doubt the future when we behold the past. We hear of the oppositions of sin and the oppositions of science in our own day, but are not dismayed, for we know that in the earliest years of its history the gospel confronted, with the simplest methods, the most powerful opposition. The solid rock of prejudice barred its progress. The world was intrenched and bastioned in error. It not only held opinions but held them intelligently, and laughed to scorn opinions which were not, and could not well be, demonstrated to reason. Against all this the preaching of the cross prevailed. It prevailed against men who were not less intelligent or acute than those who now brandish the hostile weapons. They were not inferior in philosophy, not less capable of defining or defending their views. In art and literature they stood if possible higher. They felt and expressed most of the objections urged to-day against the cross of Christ. They were sometimes scornful, sometimes bitter.

But neither skill, nor scorn, nor bitterness, could resist the truth as it is in Jesus. The blessed doctrines spread. Multitudes "saved from the guilt and power of sin" adorned society with the nobleness and purity of their lives. Superstition began to perish. Mighty and venerable systems of religion fell to rise no more. National customs here changed. The victorious energy of the cross prevailed, and a long train of triumphs, numberless as the multitude which John saw amidst the apocalyptic mysteries, attest that the "foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

These triumphs shall be perpetuated. We have no reason to believe that this or any succeeding age shall prove an exception. We know that to-day men of every social and intellectual grade gather devoutly around the cross of Christ; that by the preaching of the cross the same effects are produced as in times of old; that though many an error has been exploded and many an old truth become effete and useless, though political and social changes have taken place that are more than revolutions, and though science, pushing aside many a more showy competition, has taken its rightful place in the front rank of the world's benefactors, yet, amidst all the mutations of centuries, the cross of Christ has stood secure, and still stands in its ancient place as man's sure refuge from sin. We know all this and we feel certain that this gospel which, beginning in feebleness, pushed its way against every form and every degree of opposition, shall not now fail in its stalwart manhood. The past is a pledge of the future. To-morrow shall be as yesterday.

Meanwhile what is needed in our day is primitive simplicity accompanied by primitive power. The true ministry for this or any age is one of men learned, yet determined to know nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ and him crucified; sensitive, yet not ashamed though the doctrine of the cross be denounced as foolishness, and who have but one answer for the scoffing sceptic, the proud moralist, the sincere scientist, and the inquiring penitent. We preach "Christ crucified—Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

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CONSTITUTION OF THE THEOLOGICAL UNION OF MOUNT ALLISON WESLEYAN COLLEGE.

ARTICLE I.—NAME.

This Society shall be called "The Theological Union of Mount Allison Wesleyan College."

ARTICLE II.—OBJECT.

1. The cultivation of Theological learning among its members. 2. The advancement of the interests of the Theological department of the college. 3. The formation of a Theological literature in connection with the college.

ARTICLE III.—MEMBERSHIP.

All ministers, and preachers on trial (who are not students at the college), belonging to the Methodist Church of Canada, shall be eligible for membership and will become members, on paying the membership fee and signing the constitution.

ARTICLE IV.—OFFICERS.

The Officers of this Society shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Committee of three, to be appointed by nomination and vote.

ARTICLE V.—ANNUAL MEETING.

An Annual Meeting shall be held in Sackville during Convocation week of Mount Allison Wesleyan College, for the transaction of the business of the Union.

ARTICLE VI.—LECTURE AND SERMON.

The Union shall elect annually, by majority vote, one of its members to deliver a lecture before the Union at its next annual meeting, and also one to deliver a sermon; said sermon and lecture to be published by the Society and a copy given to each member.

ARTICLE VII.—FEES.

An annual fee of \$1 shall be paid by all members of the Union.

ARTICLE VIII.—AMENDMENTS.

No part of the constitution shall be amended without a majority of all members of the Union who vote. Notice of amendment must be given to the President three months before the annual meeting. The President, through the Secretary, shall notify the members of the proposed amendment, who may transmit their vote in writing if unable to attend the annual meeting.

**MOUNT ALLISON WESLEYAN COLLEGE
THEOLOGICAL UNION.**

OFFICERS FOR 1879-80.

PRESIDENT, - - THE REV. CHARLES STEWART, D.D.

VICE-PRESIDENT, - - THE REV. DOUGLAS CHAPMAN

SECRETARY-TREAS. - THE REV. JOHN BURWASH, M.A.

COMMITTEE { THE REV. D. KENNEDY, S.T.D. ;
 { THE REV. JOSEPH HART,
 { THE REV. WILLIAM H. HEARTZ.

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